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BAKER'S EDITION OF PLAYS

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When the Curtain Rises

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Plays for Amateur Theatricals.

BY GEORGE M. BAKER,

Author of "Amateur Dramas," "The Mimic Stage," "The Social Stage," "The Drawing-Room Stage," "Handy Dramas," "The Exhibition Dramas," "A Baker's Dozen," etc.

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"WHEN THE CURTAIN RISES"

A COLLECTION OF LIGHT AND SIMPLE DRAMAS FOR PARLOR REPRESENTATION, REQUIRING BUT FEW "PROPERTIES" AND SLIGHT "MAKING UP," PARTICULARLY ADAPTED TO THE NOVICE ON THE STAGE

BY

CLARA J. DENTON

AUTHOR OF "LITTLE PEOPLE'S DIALOGUES" "A PRIMER OF ELOCUTION"

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BOSTON

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"WHEN THE CURTAIN RISES."

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A Comedietta in One Act, for three men, two women, one boy.

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"TO MEET MR. THOMPSON."

A Farce in One Act, for eight women.

THE MAN WHO WENT TO EUROPE.

A One Act Comedy.

CHARACTERS.

MRS. BOARDWELL	*The keeper of a boarding-house*
MR. DIEHL	*An eccentric old gentleman*
CORA	*His daughter*
PROF. JONES	*"The man who went to Europe"*
HARRY	*His son*
JIM	*A colored servant boy*

COSTUMES.

For the ladies, ordinary home toilets.

For the gentlemen, ordinary business suits.

For Jim, plain cheap suit.

THE MAN WHO WENT TO EUROPE.

SCENE. — *A parlor or sitting-room.* (HARRY JONES *is discovered walking about.*)

HARRY. Just three months to-day since I entered this parlor and met for the first time my lovely Cora. Yesterday she promised to become my bride if her father, Mr. Diehl, does not object. But, then, he is so eccentric, and I fear his decision very much. He promised to meet me here in the parlor immediately after dinner. Ah, I hear his step!

(*Enter* MR. DIEHL, R. HARRY *places a chair for him.*)

MR. DIEHL. No, never mind a chair, young man, I prefer standing. Well, let us come to the point at once. So, you want my daughter?

HARRY (*starting forward*). How do you know? Has she — ?

MR. DIEHL. No, no, she has not mentioned the matter. But do you think that because I wear spectacles I have no eyes behind them? Or, because my hair is now gray, do you think it never was black?

HARRY (*eagerly*). Then, my dear Mr. Diehl, since you remember your own youth so well, I trust you will be kind to me and grant me your daughter's hand.

MR. DIEHL. Umph! You ask for my daughter as

coolly as though the giving cost me nothing. I don't doubt your affection for one another, that's a fact that has long been patent to all eyes, neither have I any objection to you personally.

HARRY. I heartily thank you, sir, for saying that much.

MR. DIEHL. But, the truth is, I am very much opposed to losing her at all. Maybe you'll find out some day what it means for a young blade to walk up and coolly ask for the "apple of your eye."

HARRY. Oh, sir, your reluctance to part with her only increases my desire to call her my wife.

MR. DIEHL. Then, I had better change my tactics and berate her as an undutiful jade.

HARRY. Instead of believing you, I should endeavor the more to remove her from one who could be so unjust to her.

MR. DIEHL (*laughing*). Well, I must admit if your hands and your heart are always as ready as your wit, you will make an excellent husband. Nevertheless, I cannot to-day, at least, consent to give you my daughter. You are both young enough to wait.

HARRY. But I may at least console myself with the thought that I have not been refused?

MR. DIEHL (*laughing*). Well, well, so you may if that's any comfort to you. But what does the Professor think of all this?

HARRY. Indeed, I have not mentioned the matter to him, and I think he suspects nothing. He pays very little attention to my affairs, being wholly absorbed in his own.

MR. DIEHL (*laughing*). In reviewing his trip to Europe, for instance?

HARRY (*laughing*). Yes, yes, that's about it.

MR. DIEHL. Do you know the sobriquet given to him by men about town?

HARRY (*anxiously*). Nothing bad, I hope.

MR. DIEHL. Certainly not. He is called "the man who went to Europe."

HARRY (*laughing*). Well, I must admit that's very appropriate.

MR. DIEHL. I heard a man yesterday offer to bet five dollars that no one could talk to the Professor ten minutes without hearing some allusions to his European trip. Had I been a betting man I should have taken him, for I am sure I could knock the Professor off the track.

HARRY (*laughing*). I do not think you could do it.

MR. DIEHL. Pshaw! nothing easier. I should introduce subjects so far away from Europe that he *couldn't* mention it.

HARRY (*eagerly*). Oh, Mr. Diehl, a fine plan occurs to me. I will find my father who is still in the dining-room, probably, chatting with Mrs. Boardwell. I will bring him here under some pretext, then you can try your skill upon him. You are to converse wholly with him for ten minutes by my watch, and if during that time you keep him from mentioning his trip to Europe, I will leave my engagement to your daughter open for three months. But, if you fail, our engagement shall be immediately announced, and the wedding day be subject only to her will and pleasure.

MR. DIEHL. That is a novel offer, but I must confess it strikes me favorably.

HARRY (*going*, R.). Well, then, I'll go and find him; of course, you have my word that I'll say nothing to him about it, Mr. Diehl. (*Stands*, R.)

MR. DIEHL. Oh, of course, that's understood. While you are gone, I'll step down to the corner and mail these letters. (*Taking them from his pocket.*) I'll meet you here in five minutes. (*Enter* MRS. BOARDWELL, R.)

MRS. BOARDWELL. Oh, excuse me, I didn't know any one was here. (*Turning to go.*)

MR. DIEHL (*going*, L.). No, no, Mrs. Boardwell, we were just going — back in five minutes, young man. (*Exit*, L.)

HARRY (*going*, R.). No intrusion, Mrs. Boardwell, our conference was just over. (*Exit*, R.)

MRS. BOARDWELL (*sits*, R. C.). Dear me, what a pity his father is not so agreeable as he is. I have grown so tired of the Professor's ceaseless chatter about Europe. I once thought I'd marry him if I got the chance, but I've changed my mind. Well, there's no danger of his asking me, he couldn't keep his mind out of Europe long enough.

(*Enter* PROF. JONES, L.)

PROF. JONES. All alone, Mrs. Boardwell? (MRS. BOARDWELL *bows; the* PROFESSOR *places a chair near her and sits in it.*) I am glad to find you so, for I have something very particular to say to you.

MRS. BOARDWELL (*annoyed*). Did you meet your son and Mr. Diehl as you came in?

PROF. JONES. I did not. That Diehl seems a pleas-

ant gentleman. I met a Mr. Diehl when (*impressively*) I was in Europe; a German, I remember. However, Mrs. Boardwell, I have something very important to say to you. You must have observed that you are very attractive to me, that I seek your presence at every possible opportunity. Of course, no honorable gentleman, especially one of my years, would act thus unless he entertains intentions of a serious nature. When I was in Europe —

MRS. BOARDWELL (*rising suddenly*). You ought to have stayed there. (*Exit hastily*, R.)

PROF. JONES (*rising and coming to* C.). Well, well, what an unaccountable manner that lady has at times. In all my *travels in Europe* (*impressively*), I never saw a lady leave a room so hastily, or, I must admit, so gracefully. She is very coy. But what did she say about my staying in Europe? No doubt that was only coquetry. It cannot be that she would refuse a man of my parts, a man of my wealth and standing, a man who has been to Europe!

(*Enter* HARRY, R.)

HARRY (*comes to* C.). Oh, here you are! I have been searching the house over for you.

PROF. JONES (*surprised*). Why, what can you want of me in so great a hurry?

HARRY (*aside*). What excuse shall I make? (*Enter* MR. DIEHL.) Oh, here is Mr. Diehl, never mind now, father, some other time will do.

MR. DIEHL (*comes to* C.). So, Professor, you are here, quite a pleasure indeed; it is not often that we have a chat with you.

(*During this speech* HARRY *places chairs for the two gentlemen; he then sits down beside* MR. DIEHL.)

PROF. JONES. No. I fear I am not a very gregarious being. The truth is, so much of my time is taken up in study that I have not much left for social pleasures.

HARRY (*aside to* MR. DIEHL, *as he consults his watch*). Time begins now, ten minutes, remember.

MR. DIEHL (*aside to* HARRY). All right; full and honest measure is all I ask. (*To* PROF. JONES.) Well, sir, a love of books is a great resource under all circumstances; I have found it so in my experience. I have spent several years of my life in the pine woods of Northern Michigan, and I am sure I must have died of loneliness during the long winter evenings, had it not been for my faithful friends and companions, books. Were you ever among the Michigan pines, Professor?

PROF. JONES. No, that is an experience still unwon by me, but —

MR. DIEHL (*interrupting hastily*). They are wonderful, wonderful, those Michigan pine trees.

HARRY (*aside to* MR. DIEHL). Dangerously near the edge that time. In another moment you would have heard of the pine trees of Europe.

PROF. JONES. They no doubt are very remarkable, perhaps quite equal to —

MR. DIEHL (*hastily*). Oh, I assure you quite superior to the pine trees of Maine. The deep silence, the shadowy vistas, the immense number of the green giants are indeed a very impressive sight. But this feature of Michigan is rapidly disappearing before the lumber-

man's greed. I, alone, have despoiled one of the best wooded counties in the State.

PROF. JONES. Indeed; I supposed you visited the pine woods for their bracing air. I was not aware you had ever engaged in the lumbering business.

MR. DIEHL. Oh, yes, I made the greater part of what fortune I possess in that business. I went into it with about ten thousand dollars, and retired, at the end of twenty-five years, with half a million.

PROF. JONES. Is it possible! Is your process a secret?

MR. DIEHL. Oh, no, it is very simple; it consists in buying your pine low and selling your lumber high.

PROF. JONES. But I should think the lumber market would be glutted occasionally, what then?

MR. DIEHL. Of course that event does occur, but I was always what people call "lucky," although my firm opinion is that "luck" consists only in careful attention to business, and close calculation. (*Aside to* HARRY.) You see, I am getting on famously.

PROF. JONES. Yes, that is a commonplace truth too often lost sight of. But did you never meet with any losses?

MR. DIEHL. None of any moment, and, when I had accumulated half a million, I thought it wise to retire. One poor fellow in the county adjoining me was worth nearly a million, all made in lumbering, but he couldn't be satisfied, he went in deeper, and lost all. Poor Hunter — he ought to have known better.

(CORA *and* MRS. BOARDWELL, *at this point, enter back*, C., *and sit down. They are seen only by* HARRY, *who motions to them in an aside.*)

PROF. JONES. I beg pardon, but did you say the name was Hunter?

MR. DIEHL. Yes; John Hunter, I think. Do you know him?

PROF. JONES. Perhaps so. There was a man of that name who was one of my fellow passengers when I went to Europe. (*These words must be spoken quickly.*)

HARRY (*closing his watch with a loud snap and, rising, throws his handkerchief in the air*). Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

MR. DIEHL (*dropping his head on his hand*). Too much for me, I declare.

(HARRY *continues to walk about and laugh.*)

PROF. JONES (*surprised*). Why, Harry! what a very uncivil fellow you are getting to be!

HARRY (*dashing at the* PROFESSOR, *and taking both his hands*). You dearest, best of fathers, I adore you. I bless you with all my heart. Oh, if I might only embrace you!

PROF. JONES (*angrily and snatching away his hand*). What nonsense is this? You are behaving like a lunatic! What possesses you?

MR. DIEHL (*rising*). Come, Professor, let us adjourn to the smoking-room. You smoke, I believe.

PROF. JONES (*rising*). Yes, I have always been a devotee of the weed, and I strengthened the habit when I was in Europe. I don't wonder you are disgusted. (*Sternly to* HARRY, *who is still capering about and laughing.*) I hope, young man, you will be in a more sensible frame of mind when I next see you. (*Going.*)

MR. DIEHL (*aside to* HARRY). Fairly won, my boy, she is yours; prize her as you should.

PROF. JONES (*looking back from his position near the exit, and speaking sternly*). Never mind him, Mr. Diehl; leave him to his vagaries; it is useless to expostulate with him, I fear.

(*Enter* JIM, R., *who, without seeing the* PROFESSOR, *who should stand at one side of the exit, goes up to* MRS. BOARDWELL.)

JIM. Oh, Mis' Boardwell, there's a man at the door as wants to see a gem'man what boards here, but he done forgot his name. He says folks calls him "the man what went to Yurrup," and I thought it must be the Perfessor (*the* PROFESSOR *starts and looks angry*) case he's been to Yurrup more'n any man I ever seed afore, but he ain't in his room, and — (*Exit the* PROFESSOR *stealthily*, R.)

MRS. BOARDWELL (*laughing furtively*). Never mind, Jim, I think the Professor has gone to see the man, so you may be excused.

JIM. All right, missus, I'se obleeged to you. (*Exit*, R.)

MR. DIEHL (*laughing*). Poor Professor! Jim's random shot struck home. But I believe I will find him, and show him what a good turn he has done you, Harry.

HARRY. Do, by all means, Mr. Diehl, I am sure that will soothe him and make him happy again. (*Exit* MR. DIEHL, R.) And now, Mrs. Boardwell, congratulate me, for I see by your face that you begin to get an inkling of the matter.

(MRS. BOARDWELL *and* CORA *rise and come forward.*)

MRS. BOARDWELL (*offering her hand*). Indeed I do,

and no one wishes you all manner of happiness more heartily than I do.

CORA (*looking from one to the other*). But I don't understand you at all. What riddles you talk in!

HARRY (*putting her hand on his arm*). Well, come with me, and I will explain it all to you. (*Exeunt* CORA *and* HARRY.)

MRS. BOARDWELL. So, they will be happy. Well, so I am, for, indeed, I would rather keep a boarding-house until I'm seventy than to be tied for life to a conceited idiot who thinks himself the only man who ever "went to Europe."

CURTAIN.

ALL IS FAIR IN LOVE.

A Drama in Three Short Acts.

CHARACTERS.

MR. NEAL . . . *A wealthy gentleman of middle age*

LOTTIE . . . . . *His daughter*

ERNEST MERLE, *A wealthy young gentleman, in love with* LOTTIE; *disguised as* MR. SPIERS, *a book-agent*

TIM . . . . . *An Irish lad*

AUNT PRUE . . *An old lady, deaf, and very eccentric*

COSTUMES.

Mr. Neal, handsome business suit.

Mr. Spiers, plainer business suit; a wig of red hair; also heavy whiskers and mustache to match.

Tim, a new cheap "store suit."

Lottie, stylish morning costume.

Aunt Prue, handsome dress for an old lady.

ALL IS FAIR IN LOVE.

ACT I.

SCENE. — *Hotel parlor.* MR. SPIERS *is discovered striding angrily about the room; comes to* C.

MR. SPIERS. That stupid Tim! I've a good mind to discharge him on the spot. Of course he has to be in my confidence, in a measure, and he has a dozen times nearly spoiled all by his blunders. Ah! there he comes.

(*Enter* TIM, R.)

TIM (*speaking rapidly*). Sure, Misther Mer—

MR. SPIERS (*angrily*). There, Tim! *can't* you learn anything?

TIM (*bowing humbly*). Faith an' I crave yer honor's parding, but shure Misther Mer— Spier — ut's roight. I got it that toime — but ye're the gay laddie buck in that rig. (*Laughs.*)

MR. SPIERS (*frowning*). Well, enough of that, Tim. But now, tell me if you've done your errands properly.

TIM. It's that I have, Mr. Spiers, — listen to that jist — though I came near niver foinding meself in this big Chicagie.

MR. SPIERS. Well, Tim, there is just one thing

about it, you must be more careful about my name. You have come very near spoiling everything several times.

TIM. Indade, thin, and I'll be that keerful, shure an' I'd niver spoil your little lark at all, at all.

MR. SPIERS (*gravely*). Tim, this is no "little lark." It is a very serious business. Perhaps if I tell you all about it, you will be able to keep a closer watch on that blundering tongue of yours. The truth is, Tim, I am in love with a young lady —

TIM (*interrupting*). Bless her purty eyes whoever she is, but she's a lucky colleen.

MR. SPIERS. No; she is most unlucky, for her father hates me, and will not allow us to meet; so, when I was nearly wild to see her, I hit upon this disguise and gained admission to her presence as a book-agent. Then, I learned that they were coming West, so I immediately followed them here.

TIM. Begorra an' is she in this city, sur?

MR. SPIERS. In this city? Tim, she is in this very hotel. I saw her last night and this morning at the table. But this is not all, Tim. I have a friend in this city who knows the young lady's father, Mr. Neal, well. I went to see this friend, without my disguise, of course, and told him my story. The consequence was that he came up to the hotel early last evening when we were all standing around talking, and, pretending to chance upon me unexpectedly, he managed to introduce me to Mr. Neal as Mr. Spiers. I stuck by him all the evening, took him to a concert, met him again this morning before breakfast, and he then said he would introduce

me to his daughter at the first opportunity. Now, do you see, Tim?

TIM. Shure, an' it's a nate schame it is sur, and I'll be as keerful as iver I can, sur.

MR. SPIERS. Well, here (*hands coin*), go out and buy me the morning paper and bring it to me down in the office. (*Exit* TIM, R.) I think if I lounge about there awhile, I am likely to see Mr. Neal and perhaps be *kindly* introduced to my beloved. (*Exit*, R.)

(*Enter* LOTTIE, L.; *carries a newspaper; comes to* C.)

LOTTIE. How delightful to know that I am at last in Chicago, but I must see what is going on in this great city. (*Sits in chair, and opening the paper is absorbed in it.*)

(*Enter* MR. NEAL, L.)

MR. NEAL (*going to* LOTTIE). Oh, here you are. I was in hopes to find you. I want to bring a young friend of mine up here and introduce him.

LOTTIE (*her eyes on the paper*). But first you must tell me who he is, what is his occupation, and where his residence?

MR. NEAL. His name is Mr. Spiers, and —

LOTTIE (*not looking up*). Oh, there, there, that's enough. Spare me anything further.

MR. NEAL. But you *must* hear the rest. Charlie Lount introduced him to me, so he must be all right. He is a very entertaining young fellow, and when discussing business matters he has a manner that suits me exactly.

LOTTIE (*turning the paper, but not looking up*). And his business?

MR. NEAL. General book-agent.

LOTTIE (*starting up and speaking scornfully*). "Book-agent!" The idea of introducing a book-agent to *me!*

MR. NEAL (*striding angrily up to her*). Now, I'd just like to know what you mean by such pertness, miss?

LOTTIE (*aside*). Dear me, what a fancy he must have taken to Mr. Spiers. (*To him.*) I mean what I say, of course. I don't care to know a book-agent. (*Walks off*, R.)

MR. NEAL (*following her*). See here, young woman, do you forget that your father sprang from the ranks, and won by honest toil the wealth that you so arrogantly enjoy?

LOTTIE (*returns to* C.; *sits*). How can I forget it when you so often go out of your way to remind me of it? (*Reading paper again.*)

MR. NEAL (*sternly*). Well, understand me, I want no more of this high-mightiness from you. It all comes from your association with that young aristocrat, Ernest Merle. His father snubbed and brow-beat me when I was a youth, and now comes his son filling my daughter's head with high-strung notions. It's too much to bear patiently, and I don't want any more of it. But I do want you to be civil to Mr. Spiers. I'm going to hunt him up now, and just remember if you get off any of your hity-tity ways to him, I promise you, you'll regret it. (*Exit*, R.)

LOTTIE (*throws down paper; rises*). Polite to him, polite to him! Ah, if he only knew how hard it will be to avoid being even more than he asks. But I do

fear I shall laugh in his face, for he looks so comical in that disguise. How dreadful it would be if I should laugh! Father would then think, of course, that I am not treating Mr. Spiers with becoming deference; but I hear them coming, I must control my countenance. (*Sits, takes up paper and reads.*)

(*Enter* MR. NEAL *and* MR. SPIERS, R. *The introduction is given and received in due form,* LOTTIE *and* MR. SPIERS *performing their parts with becoming gravity.*)

MR. NEAL. And now, Lottie, if you can entertain Mr. Spiers, I shall be very glad, as I have a little business (*looks at watch*) to attend to at this very hour. I will ask your aunt to come down. Good-morning, Spiers, see you at dinner. (*Exit,* R.)

MR. SPIERS (*embracing* LOTTIE). Your aunt? What does he mean? I didn't know you were troubled with so useless an appendage. *Must* she come here to bother us?

LOTTIE. Oh, she'll not bother us much. She's as deaf as a post, and never sits down without falling asleep. (*Both laugh.*)

MR. SPIERS. But who is she?

LOTTIE. My mother's only brother's widow. You must know, at the last moment some one told papa it would be unconventional for me to wander about the country with him unless I had a chaperon, so he sent for Aunt Prue; but here she comes.

(*Enter* AUNT PRUE, L.)

LOTTIE (*goes up to her and shouts in her ear*). Good-morning, Aunt Prue; did you rest well?

AUNT PRUE (*also speaking very loud*). Oh, Mr. Cres-

well! How do you do, Mr. Creswell? Happy to meet you.

(LOTTIE *smothers a laugh behind her handkerchief.* MR. SPIERS *bows gravely.* AUNT PRUE *passes and sits in a large chair behind them while they face the audience and laugh.*)

MR. SPIERS. So, I have another name. I hope you'll not forget who I am.

LOTTIE. I hope I shall remember it better than poor auntie does her chaperonage. See, she is asleep already.

MR. SPIERS (*embraces* LOTTIE). Bless her! She is the finest old lady I ever saw. But now I must tell you, I have ordered a carriage so that we can see something of the city. Your father approved of the plan, but as he said nothing about Aunt Prue, the carriage I have ordered will hold only two.

(*At this point* TIM *enters*, R., *unseen by them. He doubles himself up with silent laughter, and makes grimaces at them, as they stand lovingly together. He then goes out, silently, at the conclusion of* MR. SPIERS'S *next speech.*)

LOTTIE. Oh, she will never miss us, poor soul. *Isn't* she a delightful chaperon to have?

(AUNT PRUE *snores.*)

MR. SPIERS. The very best I ever saw. I hope she will always be so sleepy. Your father told me this morning that he was going next to Virginia City. Of course I also have business engagements there. (TIM *whistles outside.*)

(*They start away from each other. Enter* TIM, R., *grinning.*)

TIM. The carriage is at the dure, Mr. Mer— Spiers, yer honor.

LOTTIE (*to* TIM, *laughing*). Look out, my fine fellow. (*To* SPIERS.) I will be ready in a moment, Mr. Spiers. (*To* TIM.) You see *I* know my lesson.

(*Exeunt* MR. SPIERS *and* TIM, R.)

LOTTIE (*throwing a kiss to* AUNT PRUE, *who, with her head thrown back in her chair and her mouth open, is snoring loudly*). By, by, auntie; pleasant may thy dreams be. (*Exit*, L.)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE. — *Hotel parlor at Virginia City.* (*Costumes for this Act are the same as in Act I.*) *Enter* TIM, R., *looking eagerly about.*

TIM. Shure no, and she's not here yit. (*Sighs.*) Bless me buttons, but I wish she'd come. Shure Misther Merle — och, blast me buttons! — Shpiers, jist kapes me a-running in an' out o' this parlor to see if she's come dune the stairs jist, whiles he stands around on one leg looking that lonesome after her, 'twould make your heart ache jist to look at him. Shure, an' it's jolly larks we's had the last two weeks, sich times in owld Chicagie; och, but I wish we were back there ag'in. Well, I'll go and tell him shure his swateheart is nowhere about. (*Going*, R.)

(*Enter* LOTTIE, L.)

LOTTIE (*coming to* C.). O Tim, is that you? Good-morning; have you seen Mr. Spiers this morning, Tim?

TIM (*returning to* C.). Och, miss, have I sane him? Well, if you'll belave me, he's kept me running to look for you ever since the breakfast was over.

LOTTIE. Well, where is he now?

TIM. Out on the veranda, looking as lonesome as a pigeon in a shnow shtorrm. Whatever was the matter wid ye this morning?

LOTTIE. I know I am a little late, but I had a dress-

maker to attend to this morning, and — (*Enter* SPIERS, R.) Ah, there he comes. You may go now.

MR. SPIERS (*comes to* C. *and takes* LOTTIE'S *hand*). Yes, go now, Tim.

TIM (*aside as he goes*). Och, yis, they're moighty fast to say, "go now, Tim," but, for all their shlyness, it's meself knows well what they'll be up to the minute me back is turned on 'em. (*Exit*, R.)

(MR. SPIERS *and* LOTTIE *embrace; he then leads her to a seat beside him on the sofa.*)

MR. SPIERS. It did seem as if you would never get down-stairs this morning. But where are your father and Aunt Prue?

LOTTIE. Oh, Aunt Prue is somewhere about. You know she and I have long ago given up trying to keep track of each other. In fact, she has looked upon me as something quite beyond her management ever since that day I went off with you and left her sleeping in her chair.

MR. SPIERS. Oh, yes, I remember about that. How long did she sleep there, do you suppose?

LOTTIE. Sure enough, I never told you about that. As soon as I returned to the hotel, I ran up to the parlor, and there she was just as I had left her. It was dinner-time, you know, so I was forced to waken her. She saw my street dress, looked at her watch, and took in, of course, how basely I had deserted her. Poor auntie, she has merely pretended to look after me ever since.

MR. SPIERS. Well, you are in no danger of not

being cared for; but you did not tell me where your father is. I have not seen him at all this morning.

LOTTIE. He has joined a party who "do" the mines this morning. They had an early breakfast and went off immediately afterward.

MR. SPIERS. You must not forget I have arranged for a party for that same purpose to-morrow.

LOTTIE. No, I have not forgotten. In fact, papa was quite put out with me because I would not go with him this morning. I did not tell him to-morrow's party was of your arranging.

MR. SPIERS. If you had, he would have excused you willingly, I think.

LOTTIE. Of course he would, but I just felt perverse enough not to tell him. (*Looking at him archly.*) In fact, I shall do nothing to encourage the ridiculous influence you have acquired over him.

MR. SPIERS (*laughing*). Oh, indeed, perhaps you can manage in some way to break it up.

LOTTIE. Something must be done, for, if you'll believe me, he told me last night that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to see me Mrs. Spiers.

MR. SPIERS (*laughing*). And what answer did you make?

LOTTIE. I told him he could hardly expect me to marry Mr. Spiers until he asked me.

MR. SPIERS. And that you know he'll never do.

LOTTIE. See how poor papa is deluded. He declares that Mr. Spiers is ready to throw himself at my feet if I will only be kind and give him the opportunity.

MR. SPIERS (*laughing*). Cruel girl, to be so chary of

opportunities! But what did you say in reply to all this.

LOTTIE (*sighing*). Oh, of course, I went on in the usual strain. I declared that I should never marry any one but Ernest Merle, and that if he still continued to withhold his consent, I should be as obdurate as himself and would remain an old maid forever.

MR. SPIERS. Oh, you dear, brave girl! But, indeed, I hardly see the need of your talking so decisively to him and making him angry.

LOTTIE (*excitedly*). I tell you something's got to be done with him. He's so determined that I shall marry Mr. Spiers. If he keeps on you'll have to go away, or else I disclose the whole thing. Oh, but I was frightened, he was so angry.

MR. SPIERS. Because you declared your intention of marrying only Ernest Merle?

LOTTIE (*tearfully*). Yes; he strode around the room, and vowed I should never marry Ernest Merle while he lived. (*Sobs.*) O Ernest, he flew at me like a wild man, and shouted in my ear, "You ungrateful girl, you shall never marry that young aristocrat until I am under the ground."

(*At these words* MR. SPIERS *starts up in much excitement and walks away.* LOTTIE *buries her face in her handkerchief, and sobs aloud.*)

MR. SPIERS (*returning and laying his hand on* LOTTIE'S *bowed head*). Lottie, stop and tell me calmly if those were his very words.

LOTTIE (*looking up*). Of course they were, but why do you look so? Surely you do not wish him dead? (*Shrinking from him.*)

MR. SPIERS. No, no; but can't you see the advantage his words give us?

LOTTIE (*angrily*). How can you talk so? He shan't die; he is as strong and as well as I am, and he is by no means an old man. O Ernest, I didn't think you'd be so cruel as to want my only parent to die, even for the sake of getting *me*. (*Sobs.*)

MR. SPIERS (*dropping on his knees beside her*). My darling, you misunderstand me altogether. Isn't he *under the ground* to-day? And much farther, too, than he is ever likely to be again.

LOTTIE (*starting up and clasping her hands*). Oh, *now* I catch your meaning.

MR. SPIERS (*rising and putting his arm about her*). Well, then, put on your bonnet while I order the carriage. We'll visit the minister, dearest, within half an hour.

LOTTIE. But — but — you know, Ernest, he didn't mean it in that way. Isn't it unfair to take advantage of him in that way?

MR. SPIERS. Unfair? Certainly not. Have you forgotten "all is fair in love"? Now be ready in half an hour. Good-day to the future Mrs. Spiers, otherwise Mrs. Merle. (*Bows low, kisses his hand and exit*, R.)

LOTTIE (*slowly coming to* C.). I see he is determined to have his own way this time. Dear me, what will papa say? (*Stands in thought.*)

CURTAIN

ACT III.

SCENE. — *The same as in last Act.* (*Costumes, the same as in last Act, except for* LOTTIE, *who wears a handsome summer street costume, with light wrap and hat.*) *Enter* MR. NEAL, L.

MR. NEAL. Where can Lottie be, I wonder? I have been at home an hour; dinner is over, and still she is not here. That blundering Irish boy, Tim, says she went off this morning with Mr. Spiers. It's strange what keeps them away beyond the dinner hour. However, I may as well make myself easy about her since she's with Spiers. (*Takes up a paper and sits,* R. C.) How I do wish she would take a fancy to him. I don't see how in the world she can help it. He is far superior to that upstart Merle, according to my way of thinking. Of course I didn't allow myself to become very well acquainted with Merle. In fact, I never thought very much about him; just saw him come and go at the house like the other youngsters, until that morning he came and asked me for my daughter. Oh, the impudence of it! He knew I hated his father. Well, at least, I had the satisfaction of giving him a curt refusal. Give him my daughter? Not a bit of it. If she is determined to marry no one but him, she may pass her days in single blessedness. Of course — I am liable — to die. Ha, I see how it will be! as soon as I am under the sod they will marry, even if

they are fifty years old. Merle is just the kind of a fellow to wait all his life for the girl he wants. Well, there is one satisfaction that I can and *will* have; they shall not spend a cent of my hard-earned money. No, sir; I'll make my will, and I'll arrange it so that she'll have to choose between my money and Merle. Of course she'll take Merle, trust her for that, the stubborn chit. I don't suppose they'll miss my money so very much, since Merle has a fair fortune of his own, but I'll have the satisfaction of knowing that no one by the name of Merle can handle a cent of my money. But life is uncertain. Although I am hale and strong, who can tell what may happen? I believe (*rises and lays down the paper*) I'll go at once and hunt up a lawyer. I'll have the will all made and witnessed before the sun goes down. It's a wonder I never thought of the matter before. But it's not too late now, and I'll show that upstart Merle — (*Enter* LOTTIE *and* MR. SPIERS, R.) Oh, here you are at last! Another moment and I should have missed you, for I was going down town. So you've been off junketing as well as the old gentleman. Well, I hope you've had a gay time. (*Aside.*) I've half a mind to take Spiers with me to witness the will.

MR. SPIERS (*taking* LOTTIE'S *hand and advancing a step or two*). Mr. Neal, I beg to introduce my wife, Mrs. Merle.

(MR. NEAL *stands a few moments transfixed.*)

MR. NEAL (*breathlessly*). Your wife? Mrs. Merle!

MR. SPIERS. Exactly. I —

MR. NEAL (*striding toward him in a threatening manner*). You don't mean — you don't mean —

MR. SPIERS (*calmly*). Just what I say, Mr. Neal. (*Tears off wig and whiskers.*) This lady (*places* LOTTIE'S *hand in his arm*) is my wife. She is also Mrs. Merle. (MR. NEAL *stands silent, looking from one to the other.*) I perceive by your face that you begin to comprehend matters. You will say that we have deceived you, but I beg you to believe that I alone am to blame. What else could I do under the circumstances? Think for a moment, I beseech you, of your own "love's young dream." Yesterday you told Lottie that she might marry Ernest Merle when you were "under the ground." We have simply taken you at your word. Were you not *under the ground* to-day? How could you expect us to wait for that other (I hope) far-distant day when you are finally under the ground? Let me say further that you liked me as Mr. Spiers, and were willing that Lottie should marry me. Can you not like me a little in my own character? I assure you, Ernest Merle is quite as good a fellow as "Spiers, the book-agent."

LOTTIE (*coming forward and laying her hand on her father's arm*). O papa, do forgive us! You have long scorned Ernest for his father's sake, try now to like him, if ever so little, for his own.

(MR. NEAL *turns about and walks to* C., *with his head down.* LOTTIE *returns and takes her husband's arm.* MR. NEAL *then faces them.*)

MR. NEAL. When a man is completely beaten, I

suppose the best thing he can do is to submit as gracefully as possible, but I've more than half a mind to call you Mr. and Mrs. Spiers to the end of my days.

LOTTIE (*advancing with* MERLE *to* C.). Oh, no, papa, spare me that punishment, I beg of you. Think of it, that dreadful name! (*Enter* AUNT PRUE, L.) But here comes Aunt Prue, we must explain the situation to her.

AUNT PRUE (*very loud while coming to* C.). What's going on? Why, Lottie, what have you done with Mr. Creswell? I saw you come home with him, but I don't know this gentlemen at all. (*Looks into* MR. MERLE'S *face sharply.*)

MR. NEAL (*very loud*). This is Lottie's husband, Mr. Merle.

AUNT PRUE. An English earl! Oh, my sakes! (*Courtesies very low three times.*) Glad to meet you, sir, very glad, I'm sure. I'm descended from an English earl myself. My great-great-grandmother's cousin was an English earl. Maybe you've heard of him. Let — me — see — Oh, I cannot remember his name, now; but — Lottie, you shouldn't hang on to the gentleman's arm that way, even if he is an English earl. Girls didn't do so in my time, I tell you.

LOTTIE. Oh, bother! But, papa, dear (*she goes to* MR. NEAL *and lays her hand upon his arm; at which* AUNT PRUE *nods her head vigorously, and, coming to the front, says, in an aside, "that looks better, decidedly better"*), do say that you forgive us.

MR. MERLE (*holding out his hand*). Yes, my dear sir, surely you have not forgotten "all is fair in *love.*"

(*At this point* TIM *enters at* L., *and keeping well in the rear, goes through with a dumb show, expressive of his understanding of, and delight in, the situation. Continues this by-play throughout the remainder of the Act.*)

MR. NEAL (*giving a hand to each*). Well, you are a pair of conspirators, but I am forced to admit "all *is* fair in love."

LOTTIE. Yes, indeed, papa, "*all* is fair in love, even a Mr. Spiers.

MR. NEAL. Yes, or a Mrs. Spiers.

CURTAIN.

"W. H."

A Farce in One Act.

CHARACTERS.

MR. MERTIL.

MRS. MERTIL.

JANE . . . . . *A servant*

MISS FELTONBOUGH . . . *A "woman suffragist"*

COSTUMES.

Mr. Mertil, ordinary business suit.

Mrs. Mertil, neat home dress.

Jane, calico dress, long white apron.

Miss Feltonbough, plain dark dress, quite short; outside wraps and bonnet very plain, brown veil, a wig of short sandy hair, cotton gloves. This character must be a large (not fleshy) masculine-looking woman.

"W. H."

SCENE. — *A sitting-room or parlor. Enter*, R., MR. MERTIL *wearing his overcoat, hat, and gloves; he carries a written postal card conspicuously in his hand. Comes to* C.

MR. MERTIL. I thought I should find my wife here. Of course she doesn't expect me; she thinks I am in New York to-day. Well I'll lay her postal here on the table. (*Goes to table at* R., *front, and lays down the card.*) She will be sure to see it there. H'm, that's a bold-looking handwriting for a lady, I hadn't observed it before; some advertisement probably. I wonder who her correspondent can be. (*Takes up the card and turns it over, reads.*) "City, Tuesday, A.M. Dearest F—." Well, I didn't know she had any friends intimate enough to address her as "dearest Fannie," that must be what the "F." is intended for. Let me see what the signature is. (*Reads.*) "G. F." Ah! (*starts and looks suspicious*), surely that cannot be *our* friend George Foster? And he was once a sweetheart of hers too. But let me see what he says. (*Reads.*) "I couldn't get the 'W. H.' to-day, but I'll be there to-morrow at three o'clock, sharp. Be ready. Yours as ever, G. F." (*Striding about excitedly.*) This was written yesterday, so he'll

be here this afternoon. (*Looks at card again.*) And the "W. H." what can that be? Ah, I have it, I have it. (*Excitedly.*) Foster has just bought a new horse that he always speaks of as the "*White Horse*," of course that is what is meant by the "W. H." And this afternoon; oh, well, I'll be here to spoil that pretty game. You'll not ride after the "white horse" this afternoon, my pretty lady. But, first, I'll go put this postal card back under the door where I found it. She must never know that I have seen it. (*Exit*, R.)

(*Enter* MRS. MERTIL, L., *comes to* C.)

MRS. MERTIL (*sighs*). Dear me, I am so lonesome this afternoon. (*Goes to chair near table and sits.*) But it must be nearly time for the postman, and perhaps I shall get a nice letter to charm away my melancholy mood. (*Takes up paper.*)

(*Enter* MR. MERTIL, R., *sees his wife.*)

MR. M. (*aside*). Ha! my wife is here, I must control myself. (*To her.*) Well, Fannie, here I am quite unexpectedly.

MRS. M. (*starting up and running to him*). O Harry, what a pleasure! How glad I am to see you! (*They embrace.*)

MR. M. (*aside*). What an excellent actress she is, indeed! but of course she hasn't seen the postal yet.

MRS. M. (*taking off his hat and gloves*). But how *did* you happen to get home? (*Carries the hat and gloves to table while* MR. M. *removes his outer coat and hangs it on a tripod or other convenience in a corner.*)

MR. M. Well, you see my business all moved off with unusual smoothness. (*Both return to* C.)

MRS. M. (*putting her hand on his arm*). And I was just hoping the postman would bring me a letter from you. By the way, it must be time for him.

MR. M. Yes, he was just crossing the street as I came up the steps (*aside*), which is quite true.

MRS. M. Oh, then, I'll run into the hall and see if I have any mail. (*Exit* R.)

MR. M. Evidently her husband is not her only correspondent. Well (*walking about moodily*), how often have I said jokingly that a man who comes home unexpectedly takes his fate in his own hands. Little did I imagine I would ever realize the truth of my idle words. (*Sighs.*)

(*Enter* JANE, L.)

JANE. Oh, Mr. Mertil, you frightened me. I didn't know you were at home. I am looking for Mrs. Mertil.

MR. M. She went into the hall a moment ago.

JANE (*turning to go*). Oh, well, I can wait.

MR. M. Don't be in a hurry, Jane, I want to speak to you. (*Aside.*) How shall I approach her? (*To her.*) You are a very good girl, Jane (*takes a roll of bills from his pocket*), and I would like very much indeed to make you a little present.

JANE (*interrupting sharply*). I don't want any of your little presents, so please keep them to yourself, sir.

MR. M. (*aside*). H'm, spirited. Well, it will not do to stop now. (*To her.*) Jane, don't be offended when no offence was intended. I simply want to ask a favor of you, and, as you have always been so good a girl

and have done many little kindnesses for Mrs. Mertil, I think you really deserve a little extra pay now and then, that is all.

JANE. I am willing to do you the favor if I can, but I don't want any pay for it: so make it known quick, for I am in a great hurry with my work.

MR. M. Well, then, tell me this. Who are the most frequent visitors here when I am away?

JANE. That's easy enough to tell. Mrs. Jones, I think, comes the most often of any one, then Mrs. Binns comes quite often too, and there's —

MR. M. But, among *my* friends, whom do you remember seeing?

JANE (*surprised*). Your friends? Why, indeed, sir, I don't remember as any of *your* friends come to see Mrs. Mertil. Why should they?

MR. M. (*embarrassed*). Oh, they might come to — er — to — er — call, you know. There's Mr. Foster, now, you know him, don't you?

JANE. Oh, yes, sir, I know him: but I've never seen him here except of an evening with his wife, and when you were at home, sir, too.

MR. M. Oh, well, that is all, Jane. You are sure you have named all of my wife's intimate friends?

JANE (*reflecting*). Well, yes, I think so, sir. Oh, there's Miss Feltonbough. She's here pretty often.

MR. M. Feltonbough! Why, that is some one I never heard of before; she must be a very new acquaintance. Who is she, and what is she like?

JANE (*laughing*). Well, sir, she's funny enough. I've never seen her face, for she always wears a heavy veil:

but she has a funny form and funny ways. She seems just like a man with a woman's toggery on.

MR. M. (*aside*). Ah! can it be the girl has blundered into the truth? I begin to fear it, for Foster is a small man, and in woman's clothes would look very like an overgrown female. (*To* JANE.) But you may go now, Jane, and if you will please not to tell any one of the questions I have asked you, I will be very grateful to you.

JANE. All right, sir, I will remember. (*Exit*, L.)

(*Enter* MRS. M., R., *wearing a white apron.*)

MR. M. Well, my dear, you have been a good while. Have you been giving chase to the mail-carrier?

MRS. M. (*laughing*). Oh, no. I went up-stairs to put on a fresh collar and this apron. Isn't it pretty? It is one that I have just finished.

MR. M. Very pretty, indeed. But my dear, could you have Jane make me a cup of tea? I have eaten nothing since breakfast except a light lunch taken on the train.

MRS. M. I will make it for you myself; come into the dining-room with me, and I will refresh you, you poor, hungry man. (*Takes his arm affectionately.*) How stupid of me not to think sooner that you might possibly be hungry. (*Exit*, L.)

(*Enter* JANE, R., *carrying an illustrated paper.*)

JANE. So she isn't here, either. Well, if I can't find her I am not to blame. I've been all over the house, so I'll jist sit down here and read a while. (*Sits.*) I'm glad enough to get a minute's time to read, for I'm right in the midst of this chapter where that

dreadful old stepfather carries off the beautiful Ada. But, what on earth can have got into Mr. Mertil to ask me so many questions about his wife's callers? I've lived here more than a year, and I never knew him to do such a thing before. He seemed to think there was something queer about Miss Feltonbough, and that's just what I have thought this long time. Why does she always keep her veil down, and why does Mrs. Mertil take her up to her own room instead of taking her to the parlor or sitting-room as she does with her other callers? There's something queer about it, and the queerest thing of all is, that Mr. Mertil is so suspicious. (*Sits lost in thought a moment, then starts up suddenly, dropping paper.*) Oh, oh, I just thought of it! I do believe she is a man dressed up in woman's clothes; wouldn't that be awful? What an exciting time there would be. Better than any story. (*Bell rings.*) There, maybe she is here now. Well, I'll just watch out a little. (*Runs out*, R.)

(*Enter* MRS. MERTIL, L.)

MRS. M. I suppose Jane has gone to the door. Dear me, what if it should be she? (*Takes postal card from pocket.*) Yes, she says at three o'clock (*looks at watch*), and it now lacks only a few minutes of that hour. I hope Jane will have sense enough to take her up-stairs as usual. Harry will not go up there, now, I think, for he said he was in a hurry to go down town as soon as he is done eating.

(*Enter* JANE, R.)

JANE. Mrs. Mertil, the man has come to mend the window-sash in your room. Shall I send him up?

MRS. M. (*nervously*). Why, yes, Jane, of course; but, dear me, the room will be cold with the window out (*exit* JANE, R.), and, of course, I shall have to entertain *her* in here. Dear me, I wish poor Harry would hurry away. But I must go back and see if he has finished his lunch. (*Exit*, L.)

(*Enter* JANE, R., *laughing*.)

JANE. Oh dear, oh dear, how funny to have that man come now of all times when we've been waiting for him for a whole week. I just know by the way Mrs. Mertil acts that she expects Miss Feltonbough. Well, I don't wonder she's nervous with her bedroom window out and that man up-stairs too. Oh, how I hope Mr. Mertil will not go away, until after she comes. Why, it's grand, just like a story.

(*Enter* MRS. MERTIL, L.)

MRS. M. Did you take the man up-stairs, Jane?

JANE. Yes'm.

MRS. M. Well, I must go up and look after him a little. (*Exit hastily*, R.)

(*Enter* MR. M., L.)

MR. M. Oh, Jane, you are the very one that I most want to see. Where do Mrs. Mertil and Miss Feltonbough sit when she is here?

JANE. Always up-stairs, sir; but if she should happen to come to-day they'll have to sit in here, because, you see, the man is mending the window up-stairs, and the room is cold. Mrs. Mertil would never take her into the parlor, because other callers are liable to come in, and Miss Feltonbough is so funny looking, you know.

MR. M. Oh, yes, I see; well, I have good reason to

think Miss Feltonbough is coming to-day. So I'll just go over to the drug store and watch for her appearance. When I see her I'll come back and be introduced to her. But you needn't mention the matter to Mrs. Mertil, for I want it to be a surprise to her. Now remember! (*Exit*, R.)

JANE (*clapping her hands and dancing about*). Oh, yes, I'll remember. Dear me, how interesting and exciting it is all getting. Oh, I do hope Miss Feltonbough is a man. Talk about stories!

(*Enter* MRS. M., R.)

MRS. M. Jane, where is Mr. Mertil?

JANE. He came through here and I heard the front door shut soon after.

MRS. M. (*goes to* L.). He must be gone then. (*Aside.*) Gone without a single word of good-by to me. What in the world can have come over him? Surely, I cannot have offended him in any way. Well, he is safely out of Miss Feltonbough's way: there is some consolation in that, at least. She will certainly be here soon. (*Bell rings; to* JANE.) Go to the door, Jane, and if that is Miss Feltonbough bring her in here. (*Exit* JANE, R.) Dear me, I have had a narrow escape, indeed. She and Harry might easily have met on the doorstep. Well, I don't believe I'll take any more such risks, not even for the sake of — (*Enter* MISS FELTONBOUGH, R.; *she carries a large book.*) And so you have come. (*They shake hands.* MISS F. *sits in a chair which* MRS. M. *places at* C., *with back towards* R. *entrance; she gives the book to* MRS. M. *and then removes her bonnet and veil, which* MRS. M. *lays on the table.*)

And so this wonderful book is in my hands at last! (*Opens and reads from title page.*) "The Woman's Hierarchy, by Miss Georgiana Feltonbough." How lovely that I should at last know a real live authoress. Oh, what fun it must be to be able to write books. (*Turns leaves of book and keeps her eyes on it.*)

MISS FELTONBOUGH (*in a hard, nasal tone*). Fun! Much you know about it! If you could only imagine the days and nights of thought and toil represented by that book.

(MR. M. *enters, cautiously,* R.)

MR. M. (*aside*). Yes, yes, that is he; I know that shock of sandy hair too well to make a mistake.

MISS FELTONBOUGH. But of course that you can never understand. To your sheltered and easy life, no suspicion — (MR. MERTIL *dashes forward, grasps* MISS FELTONBOUGH *from behind and presses her face close against his vest.* MRS. M. *screams and drops book.* MISS F. *struggles to her feet, still held by* MR. M. *with his left arm; with his right hand he pounds her on the back. Enter* JANE, L. *Whole situation as ludicrous as possible.*)

JANE (*clapping her hands*). Give it to him, give it to him, Mr. Mertil: I knew it all along, I did, I did.

MRS. M. (*shocked*). Give it to *him!* Why, Jane, what on earth can you mean? (*Goes to her husband and throws herself on his right arm.*) O Harry, Harry! do stop, you will kill the poor woman.

MR. MERTIL (*loosens his hold on* MISS F., *who straightens herself and confronts him*). Oh, oh! why it isn't — (*Turns away and drops his head.*)

MRS. M. (*following him and putting her hand on his arm*). Isn't what? O Harry, *do* explain yourself. I knew you were opposed to "Woman Suffrage," but I did not suppose you would ever carry your dislike so far as this. (*Sobs.*) O Harry, I know I did wrong to deceive you, but I wanted so much to join the society, and Miss Feltonbough is so good when you come to know her. (*Sobs.*)

MR. M. (*aside, as he goes to* L. C.). Oh, I see it all now. I have made a most egregious fool of myself, beside incurring the wrath of that stormy female.

MISS FELTONBOUGH (*putting on her hat, etc.*). Now, Mrs. Mertil, I think I have seen quite enough of the government of your home. I'll trouble you to pick up my "Woman's Hierarchy" and hand it to me.

(MRS. M. *complies, and goes toward* MISS F., *wiping her eyes.*)

MR. M. (*aside*). Fool, fool, that I have been. "W. H." was only a book after all, and I was so sure it meant "*White Horse.*" Why will people use abbreviations when writing on postal cards?

MISS FELTONBOUGH (*tucking the book under her arm*). And now, Mr. Mertil, you may rest assured I am not done with you yet. I shall send an officer here before I sleep, to arrest you for assault and battery.

MR. MERTIL (*coming to* MISS F.). What can I say to you? I am aware that no amount of apology can excuse my conduct in your eyes. I can only say that in making this most unprovoked assault upon you I was laboring under the most foolish mistake that I ever made in my life.

MISS FELTONBOUGH (*coldly*). I don't know how foolish it was, but you'll find out to your sorrow that it was the most *serious* mistake you ever made in your life.

MR. M. Well, now, Miss F., let's come to some settlement. Of course the law will give you damages, but we may as well cheat the lawyers and courts out of their fees and settle the thing for ourselves. (*Takes checkbook from his pocket.*) Jane, go and get the pen and ink. (*Exit* JANE, L.) Now, Miss Feltonbough, just say how much you will take to drop the matter?

MISS FELTONBOUGH. I am not to be bought, sir. Indeed, no amount can pay me for the indignity that I have suffered at your hands.

(*Enter* JANE *with pen and ink.* MR. M. *sits at table and prepares to write.*)

MR. M. That is true, but the courts would give you damages which I am sure you would not refuse, and of course you can always use money for "the cause." Come, now, I am sure you can use two hundred dollars to good advantage. (*Writes rapidly.*)

MISS F. (*smiling*). Yes, indeed, Mr. Mertil, I can do a great deal with so generous a sum.

MR. M. (*aside*). Buy herself some decent toggery, I hope, poor thing. (*To her.*) There, Miss Feltonbough, there is my check, and my humble apologies with it. (*Rises and hands check.*)

MISS F. (*taking it*). And don't you want my receipt exonerating you from all claims from me?

MR. M. Not at all. I know you are an honorable woman and will never refer to the matter again.

MRS. M. (*coming to* MR. M.). O Harry, I am sure you have done all that any one could ask, but you have not said yet that you forgive me.

MR. M. (*putting his arm about her*). It is you who must forgive me. I have acted like a brute and an idiot, but henceforth you may attend the "Woman's Suffrage" meetings whenever you please, and I will ask Miss Feltonbough to see that you are made a life-member of the society.

MISS F. (*offering her hand*). Oh, sir, how can I thank you enough?

JANE (*coming to* L. C.). So he wasn't a man after all. What a stupid, tiresome lot they are, anyway!

CURTAIN.

A CHANGE OF COLOR.

A Drama in One Act.

CHARACTERS.

HAROLD GREY . . *A wealthy young gentleman, fond of verse-making*

JIM . . . . . *His Irish servant*

NELLIE BROWNE . . . . . *A young lady*

LETTIE ROSS . . . . . *Her intimate friend*

ELLEN BROWN . . . *Irish servant in Nellie's home*

COSTUMES.

Harold, neat business suit.

Jim, common working clothes.

Nellie, tasteful home costume.

Lettie, the same.

Ellen, neat working dress.

A CHANGE OF COLOR.

SCENE. — *A parlor or sitting-room.* (NELLIE *and* LETTIE *are discovered seated*, C., *in rocking-chairs, and busy with fancy work.*)

LETTIE. It has just occurred to me, Nellie, it is two months to-day since you received that valentine.

NELLIE. Why, so it is. How good you are at remembering dates. (*Aside.*) She little imagines how well *I* remember it.

LETTIE. And do you still think Harold Grey sent it?

NELLIE. Do I *still* think he sent it? As if I *ever* thought so, Lettie.

LETTIE (*laughing*). Oh, come, now, Nellie: there's no use of your playing off on me in that way.

NELLIE (*very gravely*). What do you mean, Lettie? Did I ever *say* he sent it?

LETTIE. Certainly not. Oh, you sly puss! people don't always need to *say* things in order to be understood.

NELLIE. You seem to forget that it was you who suggested Harold Grey, simply because he was the only young gentleman who lived opposite my home.

LETTIE (*laughing*). Oh, you delicious piece of innocence! of course I don't forget, neither do I forget how very easily you were convinced.

NELLIE (*angrily*). Perhaps, though, you forget how much trouble you took to bring about my introduction to the young gentleman?

LETTIE (*leaning forward, and patting* NELLIE *on the knee*). Come, now, Nellie, don't be vexed with me; I'll not tease you any more. Of course I worked hard to bring about an acquaintance between you, and I am sure he, poor fellow, has worked quite as hard to keep it up.

NELLIE (*sarcastically*). You were very kind.

LETTIE (*soothingly*). There, Nellie, don't let us quarrel over Harold Grey. Indeed, if we do, I shall wish we had never either of us heard of him; but, honestly, Nellie, the next best thing to winning the young gentleman's favor myself, was to see him smile on you, as he has been doing for the last two months.

NELLIE (*sarcastically*). Perhaps it is not too late yet, for you to make a conquest of him yourself.

LETTIE (*sweetly*). Now, Nellie, dear, don't make any more of those sharp speeches. I know, and so do you, that he is up to his eyes in love with you; and you know also that I'm not a bit envious of you.

(*Enter* R., ELLEN BROWN *hastily, and carrying a crumpled sheet of note paper.*)

NELLIE (*throwing her arm about* LETTIE). You are a dear good girl, Lettie, and I—

ELLEN (*advancing* C., *speaking excitedly*). Shure, Miss

Nellie, wull ye read this? (*Extends paper. Both girls jump from their chairs, dropping fancy work.*)

LETTIE. }
NELLIE. } (*together*). Oh, what is it?

ELLEN (*more quietly*). Oh, ut's nothing fur ye's to be scairt of, young ladies. Shure I jist wants ter axe ye, Miss Nellie, did ye get a valentoine last winter beginning loike this,—

"Moi pretty colleen bawn,
Smoiling like the summer dawn."

NELLIE (*laughing, and dropping into her chair again*). No, indeed, Ellen, I did not; I am sure I am no one's "colleen bawn." (ELLEN *turns away, throws her apron over her head, and drops into the chair vacated by* LETTIE.)

LETTIE. Was there ever anything so funny? Have you broken the heart of some wild Irishman, Miss Nellie?

ELLEN (*sobbing aloud*). Och, it's desaved I am, entoirely! (LETTIE *and* NELLIE *go to* ELLEN. NELLIE *puts her hand on her shoulder.*)

NELLIE. Tell me all about your trouble, Ellen. Perhaps I may be able to help you in some way.

ELLEN (*wipes her eyes, and removes the apron, but sobs frequently as she goes on with her recital*). It's like this, Miss: Jimmie end me's been kinder off since iver St. Valentoine's day —

LETTIE (*impatiently*). But, who is Jimmie?

NELLIE. Don't interrupt her, he's —

ELLEN (*pertly to* LETTIE). Shure he's me shpark, Miss, an' a loikely one he is, too. (*Aside.*) An' a loikelier one than she'll ever pick up, I'm a-thinking,

unless she mends her manners, (*To* NELLIE.) Ye see, I jist give him the cowld showlder, case never a scrip nor a scrap of a valentoine came from him. So he niver axed no ixplanashuns of me, but jist kept out o' me woi, which same is quoite loike him. To-day we meets in the parrk, quoite be chance; and I says, kinder shwate loike, Good-morning, Jimmie. Och! but he was by me side that quick. Then he says, bold and suddin loike, "So ye didn't think much o' the valentoine I sint ye." Valentoine, I says, pretty shtiff, an' ye know ye niver sint me wan. And thin he said he did; so I made him dishcribe it, and shure it wasn't a way bit loike the mane stingy wans I got at all, at all. Thin he says nixt, and I got Misther Grey to write some shwate poitry—

NELLIE. Mr. Grey! not Mr. Harold Grey, so lately moved across the street?

ELLEN. The very same, miss.

LETTIE. But how does young Jimmie know him?

ELLEN. Och! bless ye, Miss, me Jimmie has worrked there iver sinse he was a way laddie. And shure (*looking down bashfully*) 'tis for that Misther Grey happens to be living over there: me Jimmie found the house empty, and he thought 'twould be so handy, you know.

LETTIE. Evidently Mr. Jimmie has a good head for planning.

NELLIE. But about the poetry, Lettie, did you know that Harold Grey writes poetry?

LETTIE. Indeed, it is news to me. Aren't you mistaken about it, Ellen?

ELLEN (*scornfully to* LETTIE). Mistaken? well I guess not; what me Jimmie doesn't know about Misther Harold Grey, you needn't try to foind out. (*To* NELLIE.) But his poitry is in all the papers, with some other name tul it that I disremember now; but me Jimmie could tell you.

NELLIE (*eagerly*). Oh, do find out for me, Ellen!

ELLEN. Shure and I will, Miss, to plaze you; but let me tell the rest of me story. When I said that I niver got no valentoine the loikes o' that, Jimmie whipped this bit o' paper out o' his pocket, an' he said them was the same words as Misther Grey wrote in the valentoine. And then, he says, Misther Grey directed it all shtraight to Miss Nellie Brown. So, I says, Och, you blunderin' b'y! no one calls me Nellie but your own silly self, so it's shtraight to Miss Nellie the poor valentoine wint. So I comes to ye, Miss, and ye says ye niver got no sech words at all, at all; an it's a lyin' desavin' scamp me Jimmie is afther all. (*Buries her face, and sobs.*)

NELLIE (*aside to* LETTIE). All this is very strange. I certainly did not get her valentine. (*To* ELLEN.) Will you let me see the paper, Ellen? (ELLEN *hands it to her, and again buries her face, and continues to sob. A bell rings.*)

NELLIE (*to* ELLEN). Hurry, Ellen, and see who is at the door. (*Exit* ELLEN, R., *hurriedly, wiping her eyes as she goes.*)

NELLIE (*to* LETTIE, *who looks over her shoulder, and examines writing.*) This writing is certainly done by

the same hand that penned my valentine. Don't you think so, Lettie?

LETTIE (*taking the paper*). I certainly do, which of course proves conclusively that Harold Grey sent your valentine.

NELLIE. Provided that the devoted Jimmie tells the truth.

LETTIE. Does he look capable of lying?

NELLIE. What a question! I have heard that all men —

LETTIE. Oh, there, spare us any cynicism, my dear! but —

NELLIE. Yes, *but*, and this is a very large *but*, what has become of Ellen's valentine, if Jimmie sent it? It is all —

(*Enter* HAROLD, R., *hastily. He is followed by* ELLEN. LETTIE *furtively lays the paper on a table at* L. *of* C., *and returns to* C. ELLEN *goes forward, snatches the paper, and is about to retire,* R., *when she stands transfixed at* HAROLD'S *words.*)

HAROLD. Good-morning, ladies; excuse me, Miss Nellie, but I would like, with your permission, to talk with Ellen a moment about her valentine. (NELLIE *bows assent.*) I have brought my man Jim with me, and, if you are willing, I would like to have Ellen call him in here. (NELLIE *bows, and exit* ELLEN.) I am very sorry, Miss Nellie, to trouble you with all this; but the circumstances are so very peculiar, that I find myself forced to seek an explanation from Ellen. (ELLEN *enters followed by* JIM, *reluctantly and bashfully.*) Now,

Ellen, did you receive a valentine containing some verses beginning, —

"O me pretty colleen bawn?"

ELLEN (*joyfully*). Thin me Jimmie didn't loi to me shure? But I niver got that same valentoine at all, at all, an' I thought ut's desavin' me he was. (*Looks sideways at* JIMMIE, *who smiles at her.*)

HAROLD. Then it's just as I feared. Oh, what a stupid blunder! (*To* NELLIE.) You see, I had promised to write some rhymes for two valentines: one for Jimmie, to be sent to Ellen, here (ELLEN *and* JIM *exchange smiles and glances*), and one for an old friend of mine, to be sent to his Dulcinea. The latter was late in getting to its destination, consequently, when my friend left the office, he told the boy that if a letter came bearing the postmark of this town, he must open it, and enclose whatever it contained in the envelope waiting directed on the desk, and then mail the same immediately. The office boy obeyed, and, of course, like any other inquisitive, conscience-lacking boy, read the verses, and took due note of the address.

ELLEN. Och! the mane shcamp!

HAROLD. So, a few days after, it chanced that my friend most unexpectedly obtained an introduction to the lady in whom he felt so keen an interest. Their acquaintance progressed finely, until, thanks to the smallness of the town and the office boy's indiscretion, the name of the sender of this particular valentine reached the young lady's ears.

NELLIE. } Oh, how delightful!
LETTIE. }

HAROLD. Not so delightful either, for I had mixed the valentines in my haste, and imagine how either of you would fancy being addressed by a total stranger as his

"Pretty colleen bawn,
Smiling like the summer dawn."

NELLIE. } (*laughing*). How funny! Oh, how funny!
LETTIE. }

HAROLD. My friend did not think it very funny, I assure you. The young lady wrote him a caustic note for presuming to claim her as his "colleen bawn." Then, I came in for a good round scolding for sending him lines of that character, when I knew the young lady was a stranger to him. I saw at once that I had mixed up the valentines in some way; so now, Ellen, if you will kindly give me the valentine which was intended for the other fair maid, I think I can settle this matter all around, and prove to my friend that I still have at least a grain of sense left.

ELLEN. It's roight glad I'll be to help you settle the matter, Misther Grey, if you'll jist tell me what loike was the other valentoine, shure.

HAROLD. Well, it was simply a sheet of heavy note paper, and on it some lines beginning, —

"O maiden sweet,
Across the street —"

NELLIE (*starting forward*). Why, that was my —

LETTIE (*laughing*). Well, of *all* the funny mistakes!

HAROLD (*coming to* NELLIE, *and taking her hand*). You don't mean to say, Miss Nellie, that *you* received that silly nonsense.

NELLIE (*withdrawing her hand, and speaking coldly*). I certainly did receive a valentine such as you have just described.

ELLEN. Och, Miss Nellie, an' ye got moine afther all, or the one what was mixshed up wid moine. Now, ye see (*to* JIM), that's all case ye sint it to Nellie insted o' Ellin, jist.

NELLIE (*impatiently*). I ought to have known the letter was not for me, for Brown was spelt without an *e*. (*To* HAROLD.) But, I suppose you want your valentine ; I'll look it up, and if you'll call to-morrow I'll hand it to you. (*Aside.*) It's in my pocket this very minute, but of course I shall not tell him so.

HAROLD. Oh, that will be all right, Miss Nellie. But, now, Jim, what can I do to straighten this matter between you and your " colleen " ?

JIM (*taking* ELLEN'S *arm*). Faith, sur, an' we'll straighten it ourselves jist, though thanks to ye all the same. (*They walk apart, and converse confidentially in whispers.*)

HAROLD. And now, dear Miss Nellie, I have no apology to make to you, except that the verses which the good St. Valentine brought to you were not worthy the one to whom he carried them. Thanks to St. Valentine, my friend's misfortune is my blessing.

NELLIE (*coldly*). It is all the fault of my horrid common name of Browne. (HAROLD *takes her hand, and bends toward her tenderly.*)

LETTIE (*aside*). It's very evident that I'm out of place in this crowd. Oh, if I had only a tailor's dummy, or even a stick, to make love to just now! I

believe I'll hunt up the poker as a substitute. (*Goes to rear, and, while watching the others, indulges in pantomime until the curtain falls.*)

HAROLD. Since you dislike the name of Browne so much, Miss Nellie, why not change it to "*Grey*," dear Nellie? Don't say you dislike "Grey" also.

NELLIE (*archly*). Grey always was my favorite color.

JIM (*coming forward with* ELLEN). Shure, Misther Grey, we've straightened it, sur. We're to be married in jist wan month from this happy day.

HAROLD (*shaking* JIM'S *hand*). Well done, Jim. Miss Nellie and I have also "straightened it:" she has consented to become Mrs. Grey. (*Puts his arm about her.*)

NELLIE (*saucily*). How you do take things for granted, sir!

JIM. Och, bedad, and from "Brown" to "Grey" is a' good "change o' color!" and may ye's niver rigrit that same av ye's live till ye're an hundred and a day. (HAROLD, NELLIE, R.; JIM, ELLEN, L.; LETTIE *in rear* C., *laughing.*)

CURTAIN.

TO MEET MR. THOMPSON.

A Farce in One Act.

CHARACTERS.

BELLA . . . . . *The young lady hostess*

LOU, ELLA, MARY, EMILY, GRACE, JULIA, FANNIE — *Young ladies, residents of the same town and acquainted with each other. They are also Bella's guests.*

COSTUMES.

Any tasteful dresses that may be suitably worn at a small evening party. Hats and wraps are worn on entering. The latter should of course correspond with the season, and are to be laid aside at the proper time.

TO MEET MR. THOMPSON.

SCENE. — *A parlor. Eight chairs must be placed carelessly about so that the occupants will be within easy speaking distance of one another and yet not too far from* C. *Curtain rises.* BELLA *enters* L, *and sits.*

BELLA. To think that at last, at long, long last, this village really possesses a full-grown, live, rational, young man! I can hardly realize it. To be sure, we have had Tom Jones, and Harry Spar, and John Smith, the first and second not yet out of their teens, the last a forlorn widower of forty. But now, O joy! here is an eligible young man of not more than twenty-three or four. Tall, handsome, dark-eyed, a lawyer, and with — Oh, *such* a moustache! Dear me! I can hardly wait until I see him entering the room. (*A door-bell rings behind the scenes.* BELLA *starts up.*) Oh, I do hope that is he! What a charming *tête-à-tête* we may have before the other girls get here! (*Enter* LOU, R. BELLA *rushes to meet her. They embrace.*)

BELLA (*motioning* L.). Just step in here, Lou, and remove your wraps, and arrange your hair. (*Exit* LOU, L.) I might have known that Lou would be the

first one on hand. Of course that is her privilege, as she is my most intimate friend. (*Re-enter* LOU, L. *They both sit near* C. *as* LOU *speaks.*)

LOU. So, I am the first arrival. I did not expect to be. I thought the girls would all arrive early. O Bella! if you only knew the stir those invitations "to meet Mr. Thompson" have created in this stupid little burgh.

BELLA. Nonsense, Lou! why should it?

LOU. Why should it? Oh, now, Bella, don't pretend not to know that Mr. Thompson is the most delightful, most irresistible, most rare creature ever seen in this huddle called by courtesy a "town."

BELLA. So you have seen him? (*The bell rings. They both spring up, rush to centre, and exclaim together, excitedly,* "*There he is!*" *Enter* ELLA, R. *They rush forward, embrace her, and she is directed by* BELLA *into the adjoining room, as was* LOU. *Exit* ELLA, L. BELLA *and* LOU *resume seats.*)

LOU. Of course *Ella* would be here on time. I don't suppose cables and chains could have kept her at home to-night.

BELLA. Well, all of my invitations have been accepted. I don't suppose any of the girls would miss coming.

LOU. Unless it may be those whom you forgot to invite.

(ELLA *enters in time to hear the last word.*)

ELLA (*sits near the others*). And how many have you invited, Bella?

BELLA. Only nine.

ELLA and LOU. } Nine!

LOU. Poor Mr. Thompson!

ELLA. He will not live to tell the tale.

BELLA. I begin to think he foresees the danger, and that his instincts of self-preservation are too strong to admit of his coming.

(*The bell rings again. They all start to their feet, and exclaim, "There he is!" as before. Enter* MARY. *Repeat as on* ELLA'S *entrance.* BELLA *directs as before. Exit* MARY, L. *The others resume seats.*)

ELLA. Of course *Mary* would come, trust her for that. Indeed, Bella, it is very generous of you to give all of us girls the pleasure of Mr. Thompson's acquaintance. (*Enter* MARY.) Almost any other girl would have kept his society for herself.

MARY (*approaches the others, and sits*). But, we must have met him sometime, and, of course, she prefers to have the performance take place under her supervision, as it were.

LOU. Then, I think she will be disappointed, for *I* don't believe he's coming.

(*The bell rings. All start up as before, repeat exclamation, etc. Enter* EMILY, R. *Repeat all "business" as on entrance of others. Exit* EMILY, L. *Others resume their places.*)

MARY. Oh, I knew *she* would be here! It's so long since she's seen a young man, she (*enter* EMILY, L.) forgets how one looks.

EMILY (*coming forward*). What is that? Who forgets how what looks? (*Sits near others.*)

BELLA. We all have forgotten how a full-grown, live young man looks.

EMILY. Well, where is your curiosity? Why don't you bring him out?

LOU. We await his royal pleasure.

(*Bell as before. Repeat former business fully. Enter* GRACE, R. *Repeat as for others. Exit* GRACE, L. *The others resume their seats.*)

EMILY. Oh, I knew *Grace* would come. She has been on what the boys call a "still hunt" for a (*enter* GRACE, L.) young man for nobody knows how long.

GRACE (*as she comes to the others, and sits*). Who has been a young man for nobody knows how long? Surely, not Mr. Thompson?

BELLA. Oh, no! not *Mr. Thompson.*

LOU. Oh, dear, no! not *Mr. Thompson.*

ELLA. No indeed! not *Mr. Thompson.*

MARY. Oh, my, no! not *Mr. Thompson.*

EMILY. Why, certainly not *Mr. Thompson.* (*These answers must be very emphatic.*)

BELLA. I conclude you have not seen him, Grace?

GRACE. Seen him? Indeed, I haven't. I have *heard* of nothing else for the last two weeks but Mr. Thompson. Is he handsome?

ALL IN CONCERT. Handsome! handsome! Oh, oh, oh!—oh, oh, oh!

GRACE. Dear me, what a wonder he must be! But why doesn't he come? (*Bell, as before. Repeat former "business." Enter* JULIA, R., *as before. Exit* JULIA, L. *The others resume seats.*)

EMILY. Bella, you certainly were not on the look-out for beauty, when you invited Julia.

ELLA. Was she when she invited the rest of us?

MARY. Oh, come now, Ella! leave that (*enter* JULIA, L.) for Mr. Thompson to decide.

JULIA (*taking seat*). What must Mr. Thompson decide?

GRACE. Which one of this flock his highness shall escort to her home.

ELLA. He lives the nearest to my house. Doesn't that give me the first claim?

LOU. And my home is directly on the way thither, so that gives me his other arm.

MARY. Pshaw, girls! can't you see that he is in gallantry bound to escort the one who lives at the greatest distance from here? And *her* name is Mary.

EMILY. And my home is only two blocks from your house.

JULIA. But how can he go home with any of us, unless he first gets here?

(*Bell rings. Repeat former movements, etc. Enter* FANNIE, R, *as before. Exit* FANNIE, L. *All sit again.*)

GRACE. Now, girls, Fannie lives farther away than any of us.

JULIA. And if he goes home with her, he passes my door, so, I think (*enter* FANNIE, L.), Fannie and I will have him.

FANNIE (*joins others, and sits*). Have whom? Not Mr. Thompson?

ALL (*in concert and laughing*). Oh, yes, Mr. Thompson! Oh, yes, we'll all have Mr. Thompson!

FANNIE (*indignantly*). Why, girls, I am surprised at you all. But please don't include my name. The idea of angling for a young man in that way!

BELLA. O Fannie! don't scold us! the girls were only trying to decide whom he should escort home, and they settled on you and Julia.

FANNIE (*looking around*). But where is the young man?

ALL. Oh, he isn't here yet!

FANNIE. So, while you are waiting, you are settling the question of his attentions. You might cast lots on the matter. (*Sarcastically.*)

EMILY. I'll tell you a good plan, girls.

ALL. What is it? What is it?

EMILY. Let him choose for himself.

ALL. Oh! oh!

BELLA. Well, now, girls, since you have settled the question, I will tell you he probably will escort none of you home to-night, for I have invited his two sisters to accompany him. I knew you would be dying to meet them.

(*Bell rings. All exclaim, as before. A voice at right entrance calls loudly, "Miss Bella, here is a note for you!"*)

BELLA. You hear that, girls; pray excuse me a moment. (*Exit* BELLA, R.)

(*The others now huddle together at* C., *muttering to each other, "Mean thing!" "She did it on purpose!" "Much we care for his old sisters!" "She didn't want*

him to go home with any of us!" "We'll pay her up!" "I'll invite him to my house!" "And so will I!" The last exclamation in chorus. Enter BELLA, R., *carrying an open letter. They all drop quickly into their chairs, and are silent.*)

BELLA (*coming to* C.). Young ladies, I have just received this note, which I will read. (*Reads.*)

"MISS BELLA, — We are forced, at the last minute, by circumstances beyond our control, to decline your very courteous invitation. I will call on you to-morrow, and explain more fully.

Yours with many regrets,
HARRY THOMPSON."

(*All rise, and come to* C.)

LOU. So this is the way we "meet Mr. Thompson!"

ELLA. How charmed I have been to "meet Mr. Thompson!"

MARY. What a rare treat "to meet Mr. Thompson!"

EMILY. Oh, lovely Mr. Thompson!

GRACE. Delightful Mr. Thompson!

JULIA. Oh, rare Mr. Thompson!

FANNIE. Very rare, indeed!

ALL (*except* BELLA). The next time I go out "to meet Mr. Thompson" —

BELLA (*smiling and courtesying*). Let us hope you will "meet Mr. Thompson."

CURTAIN.

(*Real names may be substituted, if preferred, throughout.*)

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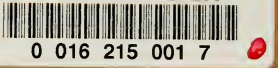
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